ANNUAL REPORT
1990-91

ALBERTA HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
DISCIPLINES COMMITTEE

91-05784/

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Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee

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I. Introduction

This is the fourteenth Annual Report of the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee. It contains an outline of the Committee's history, mandate, and structure and an account of the activities undertaken during the period of April 1, 1990 to March 31, 1991.

A. History of the Committee

In 1973, the Alberta Health Manpower Committee was established to coordinate personnel planning in the health care sector. Chaired by the Deputy Minister of Health and Social Development, it consisted of senior officials from that department and from the Departments of Advanced Education, Labour and Manpower, and the Alberta Hospitals Services Commission.

In 1975, after government departments were reorganized, a new interdepartmental coordinating body was established: the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee. Membership consisted of senior officials from the Departments of Advanced Education and Manpower, Hospitals and Medical Care, and Social Services and Community Health. In August 1976, the Committee's mandate was formally established by Ministerial Order, and a Chairman was appointed from outside government to act as facilitator and public representative. The Committee's responsibilities were increased to include workforce planning in the social service sector.

Subsequent to 1976, the Committee's makeup has reflected reorganization of government departments, but its mandate has remained unchanged.

B. Mandate of the Committee

Alberta's health care and social service programs require an adequate supply of appropriately trained personnel. Research on trends in supply, workforce distribution, utilization and demographics must be carried out in an attempt to keep shortages and surpluses in close balance. The makeup of personnel, the distribution of the workforce and the changing needs must be carefully monitored. This task is complex since service needs and availability of personnel are dependent on many factors. Economic conditions, demographic changes, regulations governing professions, availability of training programs, and changing technology must all be taken into consideration. Planning workforce requirements is a complex and onerous responsibility which requires the cooperation of many interest groups. The Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee has the mandate to act as a central body within government to provide direction and coordination in planning health and social service workforce needs.

The Committee's Terms of Reference are found in Appendix A on page 10. These have recently been reviewed by the ministers of participating departments. Since the terms are very broad and resources within government have been reduced, the ministers directed the Committee to focus on data collection and analysis, publication of information, and

coordination of research activities. As a result, the Committee's three principle functions are:

- To advise government on health and social service personnel and related issues;
- To collect and disseminate relevant up-to-date workforce data for research purposes;
- To coordinate the planning and research activities of participating departments in the area of health and social service personnel and to ensure necessary research is being undertaken within government or by external groups.

To supplement this activity, it is hoped that those outside government such as employers, professional associations, and other interest groups will take an active part in planning to meet the specific needs of their organization. Liaison with the Committee is encouraged to ensure data and information is shared, duplication is avoided, and communication on workforce issues is strengthened.

C. Structure and Membership of the Committee

The Committee consists of senior officers from departments with responsibilities related to health and social service personnel. In 1990-91, the lead Minister was the Hon. R.S. (Dick) Fowler, Q.C., Minister Responsible for Professions and Occupations. Mrs. Dianne Mirosh, Chairman of the Council on Professions and Occupations and MLA for Calgary Glenmore, assisted Mr. Fowler with his responsibilities. Ministers of other participating departments were: the Hon. John Gogo (Advanced Education), the Hon. Norm Weiss (Career Development and Employment), the Hon. John Oldring (Family and Social Services), and the Hon. Nancy Betkowski (Health). Mr. Elvin Christenson, F.C.A. served as Chairman.

The Committee is supported by a Secretariat which consists of an Executive Secretary and research staff from participating departments. In addition, the Workforce Planning Unit, a group of research and support staff, is dedicated to the Committee's work. This unit is responsible for data collection through annual surveys, maintaining a data base on health and social service personnel, publishing annual reports on the workforce, and responding to information requests. The Workforce Planning Unit is administratively based in the Professions and Occupations Bureau, under the direction of the Executive Secretary.

A list of members of the Alberta Health & Social Services Disciplines Committee and its Secretariat for the 1990-91 year appears in Appendix B on page 11.

II. Planning, Coordination, Research, and Liaison

The Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee acts as a forum for members of participating departments to discuss current trends and developments affecting the supply and demand of health and social service personnel. During 1990-91, the Committee met on a quarterly basis with one additional special meeting. The Secretariat met as required to prepare for these meetings or to work on special projects.

Following is a summary of the Committee's activities and other endeavours relating to the health and social service workforce which were reviewed by the Committee during the 1990-91 year.

A. Study of Incentives for Recruitment and Retention

Workforce planning must take into account the distribution of personnel. Although the total supply of personnel for the province may be considered adequate, shortages in certain areas, particularly in northern and rural localities, may be evident. Such situations are not unique to Alberta and maldistribution has been an ongoing concern to those involved with workforce planning. Incentives have been used for many years in an attempt to enhance recruitment and retention in these areas. Although the Committee was aware of the various incentive programs offered by government, little information was available about incentives which were offered through employers. The Disciplines Committee conducted a study to obtain such information as the type of incentive programs offered, how these programs are utilized, expenditures on incentives, and effectiveness of the programs. Questionnaires were mailed to health units, hospitals and long term care facilities throughout the province except the urban areas of Calgary, Edmonton, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat and Red Deer. Data was also obtained from the Northern Alberta Development Council since it provides funding for several incentive programs.

Data and information were analyzed and the final report **Survey of Incentives for Recruitment and Retention** was prepared by Peat Marwick Stevenson and Kellogg in collaboration with the Workforce Planning Unit. Copies of the report may be obtained from the Disciplines Committee at the address noted in this annual report.

B. Health and Social Service Personnel in the Region Served by the Northern Alberta Development Council (NADC)

The Northern Alberta Development Council, which advises government on issues in the north, requested information on health and social service personnel working in its region. In 1990-91, the Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee produced two reports: **Health and Social Service Personnel Working in the Northern Alberta Development Council Area, March 31, 1989**, and **Health and Social Service Workforce in the Northern Alberta Development Council Area 1987 to 1990**. Both these reports were based on data from the Disciplines Committee annual survey of employers.

In the first report, an analysis of the March 31, 1989 survey was carried out and data for the NADC region was compared to data from the province as a whole.

The second report, **Health and Social Service Workforce in the Northern Alberta Development Council Area 1987, 1988, 1989, and 1990** contained data from the last four years of the Disciplines Committee annual employer survey. The data were analyzed for each of the years, and tables were provided on type of employer, the number of personnel employed, number and percentage of full-time and part time personnel, proportion of personnel to 10,000 population, and vacancy and turnover rates.

Further information on these studies or copies of the report may be obtained from the Disciplines Committee at the address noted in this annual report.

C. Report of the Working Group on Practice Requirements for Clinical Psychology

In March 1990, the Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee created a working group to study and make recommendations regarding the minimum qualifications required to practise clinical psychology. This group consisted of representatives from the Psychologists Association of Alberta, educational institutions, the service sector, and government. The Chairman of the group, Robert Fraser, M.D. was appointed from outside government.

The group's task was to define clinical psychology and the services it includes, to identify the competencies and skills currently taught at Alberta institutions, and to study and make recommendations on the competencies and training required to practise clinical psychology. As background information for the group, the report **Profile of Psychologists in Alberta** was prepared. This report describes the makeup of psychologists in Alberta: their age, gender, education, where they graduated, where they are employed, and their service focus. This information was obtained from data collected by the Psychologists Association of Alberta. In addition, the report contained employment data over a five year period which had been collected through the Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee annual employer survey.

After collecting the necessary information and consulting with interest groups, the working group recommended that the minimum qualification for a person to practise clinical psychology be a doctorate in clinical psychology. The group's final report was submitted to the Disciplines Committee in November 1990.

The Committee studied the group's findings and adopted the recommendation that the minimum requirement to practise clinical psychology be a doctoral degree. Considering this recommended change, the Committee examined options for amending the legislation. It advised the Council on Professions and Occupations that implementing the change should be carried out through regulation and that the master's degree should be maintained as the minimum standard for registering psychologists in general.

D. Response to the Recommendations in the Rainbow Report

The Rainbow Report: Our Vision for Health was submitted to government by The Premier's Commission on Future Health Care for Albertans. This report contained several recommendations pertaining to health human resources. Responses to these recommendations were coordinated by Alberta Health and Advanced Education and the Disciplines Committee was consulted in this process. The Committee identified a need for an enhanced human resources data base, integrating existing sources of data where possible, and a greater focus on data analysis. A report which addressed implementation of recommendations found in the Rainbow Report was submitted to government in December 1990.

E. Federal Provincial Advisory Committee on Health Human Resources

The Federal Provincial Advisory Committee on Health Human Resources is an intergovernmental body made up of representatives from the federal government, the provinces, the Yukon and the Northwest Territories. It reports to the Conference of Deputy Ministers of Health on issues relating to health care personnel. The Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee continued to liaise with the Federal/Provincial Committee and was represented at the biannual meetings. Reports of these meetings were submitted to the Disciplines Committee for discussion and review. The Committee provides a structure for a coordinated approach to health human resource planning at a national level. Although training and employment of workers are within provincial control, the mobility of workers and right to employment across the country results in a need to support activities on a Canada wide basis. The Federal/Provincial Committee carries out special studies, produces and distributes an annual publication containing data on health personnel, and serves as a forum to share information on provincial activities and concerns.

F. Other Activities in Human Resource Planning

The Disciplines Committee kept apprised of research undertakings which relate to the work of the Committee but are being carried out by others. Some of this activity is noted below.

- **Nursing Action Plan**
  Alberta Health is developing a nursing action plan to address nursing issues related to three areas: personnel planning, education and work-life. A Steering Committee has been formed, consisting of representatives from a broad group of stakeholders, and activity teams are being organized to begin work on each of the three areas. This project is being coordinated by the Provincial Nursing Consultant. The Disciplines Committee will be involved in the work of the activity team for personnel planning. This working group is to examine current planning models, existing data bases, and the roles and functions of nurses. The findings will be utilized for workforce planning to meet future service requirements.

- **Medical Laboratory Personnel**
  A working group within the Departments of Health and Advanced Education is undertaking a study of issues relating to medical laboratory personnel. The training and service requirements for such occupations as medical laboratory technologists, combined labora-

tory and x-ray technicians, and medical laboratory scientists are being reviewed.

- **Psychiatric Nursing**
  The training program for psychiatric nurses at Alberta Hospital Edmonton was discontinued in September 1990. The last class will graduate in June 1991. An interdepartmental subcommittee has been examining training alternatives for nurses in mental health care and will make recommendations in this regard.

G. Changes in Educational Programs

A number of changes to the training programs offered to health and social service personnel occurred during the past year. The following summarizes developments in this area.

- **Nursing Education**
  Collaborative Nursing Education Models
  Nursing educators in the province have been working on the development of innovative nursing education models. A new program commenced in September 1990 between Red Deer College and the University of Alberta. Students will be able to complete either a diploma or B.Sc. in nursing in Red Deer. In Edmonton, a collaborative model was also approved for implementation in September 1991 by the five schools of nursing. Grant MacEwan Community College, the Misericordia, Royal Alexandra and University of Alberta Schools of Nursing will have a common curriculum. Students may exit the program with a diploma (2 1/2 years) or complete their studies with a B.Sc. in nursing from the University of Alberta.

  Athabasca University
  The post diploma baccalaureate nursing program at Athabasca University commenced in September 1990. It is designed to reach nurses in rural Alberta.

  PhD Program
  A doctoral program in nursing has been approved at the University of Alberta commencing in September 1991. This is the first PhD nursing program to be offered in Canada.

- **Speech Pathology and Audiology**
  The baccalaureate degree in speech pathology at the University of Alberta is being discontinued with the last class graduating in May 1994. It is being replaced by a master's degree program to be implemented in September 1992 with a first year enrolment of 30 students.

III. Collection and Distribution of Workforce Data and Information

One of the responsibilities of the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee is to develop and maintain inventories on training programs for health and social service personnel and the supply and distribution of the workforce. A high priority is placed on this task since comprehensive and reliable information is required for research purposes and the management of human resources.

The Disciplines Committee collects this information through several annual surveys conducted by the Workforce Planning Unit and participating departments. One survey is directed to employers and self employed professionals, another to professional associations and licensing bodies and a third to post secondary institutions. These groups have been very cooperative in providing information and the Committee is most appreciative for the support it receives.

The data and information collected are used by the Committee to maintain a data base on employment of health and social service personnel and for annual publications distributed by the Committee. The Committee also responds to specific requests from survey participants and interest groups in order to ensure the data collected are shared with a wide network and duplicate surveys are avoided.

A. Survey of Professional Associations and Licensing Bodies

The annual survey of professional associations and licensing bodies was conducted in December 1990. This survey was first carried out in 1978. As in previous years, this year's survey consisted of mailed questionnaires and follow-up telephone contact. In total, over 50 health and social service associations and licensing bodies were included in the study. The response rate was excellent and the Committee is grateful for the information it received.

Many of the health and social service groups are regulated by professional legislation which sets standards for practice and provides a mechanism for handling complaints. As part of this legislation, professional associations are often granted self governing powers which include responsibilities for registration of their members. Registration of professionals is compulsory if the legislation grants exclusive practice rights or if practitioners wish to use the titles reserved for a particular discipline. Information which is collected through this process is very useful for monitoring the supply of personnel. The type of information collected for registration purposes varies between groups depending on legislative requirements and other factors. However, associations are encouraged to compile data on gender, age, level of education, employment status, type of employer, annual hours practised and area of practice to arrive at a profile of their membership which can be used in human resource management.

The information collected through the survey of professional associations and licensing bodies is used to supplement data obtained from the survey

of employers and self-employed professionals. It is published in the Committee's annual inventory of health and social service personnel.

B. Survey of Employers of Health and Social Service Personnel

On March 31 of each year, the Disciplines Committee conducts a survey of all health and social service employers and self employed professionals. Initiated in 1979, the survey is directed to all employers in the province and is intended to give a snapshot of the health and social service workforce for a particular point in time. The questionnaires and list of employers are updated to reflect changes in the provision of services and the workforce. The questions asked have been standardized as much as possible so that year-to-year comparisons may be made and trends may be monitored.

The survey consists of mailed questionnaires which differ primarily in the type of occupations they include according to the services provided by groups of employer. As in previous years, the survey collected information on permanent or regular personnel, casual or relief personnel and occupations for which recruitment difficulties occurred. With respect to permanent personnel, the questionnaire requested information on the number of full-time and part-time employees and the number of vacancies and resignations. For casual, contract, relief or temporary personnel, employers were requested to provide data on the total number employed and the number of hours worked during the month of March 1990. Two questions related to recruitment difficulties. One question was designed to quantify recruitment difficulties by requesting employers to specify the occupations that had been vacant for three months or longer. The second question asked respondents to identify the occupations for which they anticipated problems in recruitment and the reasons such difficulties were expected.

In 1990, just over 5,400 employers and self employed professionals were included in the survey. Of these, 98.1 percent responded. The Committee extends its sincere thanks to all participants. Without such full cooperation, the value of the information collected would diminish substantially.

As in previous years, about 80 health and social service occupations were included in the questionnaires. For a number of occupations, such as registered nurses, social workers, child and youth care workers, and ambulance, day care, dental and eye care personnel, the occupational category was further refined by level of training or area of specialization. In all, there were 139 occupational categories included in the questionnaires.

The survey was carried out by the Committee's Workforce Planning Unit with assistance from the Departments of Advanced Education and Health.

A summary of the information collected through the survey was published in a report and distributed to all participants, government departments and non-government interest groups such as professional associations, educational institutions and service agencies. Further analysis is ongoing and it is hoped that subsequent reports specific to employer groups will be forthcoming.

C. Survey of Health and Social Service Education Programs

Post secondary educational institutions are surveyed annually to obtain information on enrolments and graduates for all health and social service programs. This survey originated in 1978 and is conducted by the Program Coordination Branch of the Department of Advanced Education.

The survey conducted in 1990 collected information on over 40 areas of study in programs offered at Alberta's post secondary institutions. Programs were broken down by level of studies and included post graduate degrees, undergraduate degrees, diplomas, certificates, refresher courses and post-basic certification. Universities, technical institutes, community colleges, vocational training centres and hospitals were included in the survey. Data were requested on the program length, intake and graduation dates, quotas, number of applicants, enrolments by year and the number of graduates.

Information collected in the 1990 survey was compiled with data from previous years to obtain a five year inventory. Users of this inventory are able to calculate year-to-year changes, attrition rates and trends. The data were published in Advanced Education's yearly inventory of health and social service education training programs and incorporated in the Disciplines Committee's annual inventory of health and social service personnel.

Output from provincial training programs is the main source of supply of qualified personnel. Consequently, the inventory of health and social service personnel is used extensively by the Disciplines Committee and outside groups to monitor potential supply and to plan future requirements.

D. Publications

In addition to its Annual Report, the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee produces several yearly publications as a means of sharing information on health and social service personnel with all interest groups. These reports contain information on the supply, demand, and distribution of personnel, labour force indicators, legislation governing professions, professional associations and training programs. The publications are widely distributed among government departments, non-government agencies, educational institutions, employers, professional associations and libraries.

The following publications were circulated during the past year:

- Inventory of Health and Social Service Personnel, 1989
- Alberta Health and Social Service Education Programs Inventory
- Health and Social Service Workforce in Alberta, 1990

E. Information Requests

The Committee's annual workforce publications include summary information only. Further analysis of data collected through the yearly employer survey is conducted on request. Data may be analyzed by employer group, region, census division, occupation, etc. provided the confidentiality of respondents is not revealed. The Committee encourages interest groups to request data specific to their needs. The Workforce Planning Unit responds to the requests for additional data analysis or other information. In 1990-91, such requests were received from government departments, non-governmental agencies, educational institutions, professional associations and the public.

Appendix A
Terms of Reference of the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee

1. In conjunction with appropriate agencies, develop on an ongoing basis inventories on:
   (i) Health and social services disciplines training programs;
   (ii) Health and social services disciplines supply and distribution.
2. Review pertinent studies, data and executive decisions from other jurisdictions on the training and supply of health and social services manpower.
3. Review short and long range plans from appropriate agencies for:
   (i) Health and social services disciplines training programs;
   (ii) Health and social services disciplines supply and distribution.
4. Review alternative requirements to meet the needs for the development of health and social services in the future.
5. Define areas of particular concern in the training and/or supply and/or distribution of health and social services personnel and recommend ways of resolving these concerns.
6. Advise from time to time on request the need for in-depth studies in particular areas of manpower training and supply.
7. Undertake such other related activities as may be required.
8. Submit an Annual Report on the activities of the Committee.

Appendix B
Membership of the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee

Members of the Committee	**Mr. Elvin A. Christenson, F.C.A., Chairman, Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee**
	Mr. William E. Novasky, Director, Program Coordination Branch, Alberta Advanced Education
	Dr. Bev MacKeen, Director, Industry Analysis Branch, Alberta Career Development and Employment
	Ms. J. (Anne) Ward Neville, Executive Director, Family Support Services, Alberta Family and Social Services
	Mr. Don J. Junk, Assistant Deputy Minister, Policy and Planning Services Division, Alberta Health
	Mr. Dennis Gartner, Executive Director, Alberta Professions and Occupations Bureau
Members of the Secretariat	**Mrs. Frances Rawson, Executive Secretary, Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee (Professions and Occupations Bureau)**
	Ms. Laura Frigo, Research Officer, Program Coordination Branch, Alberta Advanced Education
	Mr. Ralph Westwood, Assistant Director, Program Coordination Branch, Alberta Advanced Education
	Ms. Eva Luczynska, Research Officer, Industry Analysis Branch, Alberta Career Development and Employment
	Mr. Kim Bechtel, Director, Personnel Planning & Management Services Branch, Alberta Family and Social Services
	Mrs. Brenda Johnson, Manager, Health Disciplines Planning, Research and Planning Branch, Alberta Health
	Mrs. Cecilie Lord, Director, Research and Planning Branch, Alberta Health
	Ms. Dawn Schumilas, Planning Analyst, Research and Planning Branch, Alberta Health
	Ms. Kathleen Morrow, Research Officer, Professions and Occupations Bureau